

**Communauté Economique
Des
Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest**



**Economic Community
Of
West African States**

**Sixth Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of
Telecommunications and ICT**

Abuja, 11 May 2006

Final Report

Abuja, May 2006

1. **Introduction**

The sixth meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Telecommunications and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) was convened by the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat in collaboration with the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the International Telecommunications Union.

The meeting was held at the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat on the 11th May 2006 mainly to validate the legislative and regulatory texts for the establishment of a Common Market for ICT in West Africa.

The following fifteen (15) Member States attended the meeting:

1. Benin
2. Burkina Faso
3. Cape Verde
4. Cote d'Ivoire
5. The Gambia
6. Ghana
7. Guinea
8. Guinea-Bissau
9. Liberia
10. Mali
11. Niger
12. Nigeria
13. Senegal
14. Sierra Leone
15. Togo

The following institutions and development partners were also in attendance:

- ITU (International Telecommunication Union)

- UEMOA (West African Economic and Monetary Union)
- RASCOM (Regional African Satellite Communication)
- WATRA (West African Telecommunications Regulatory Association)
- TCI/Exchange Telecoms Consortium
- IWTGC (Infinity Worldwide Telecommunications Group of Companies)

The list of participants is attached as Annex 1.

2. **Opening Session**

The opening ceremony was marked by two speeches:

- Welcome address by the ECOWAS Deputy Executive Secretary for Integration Programmes;
- Speech by the Minister of Communications of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

In his address, the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, on behalf of the Executive Secretary, welcomed all the participants to the meeting. He recalled the objectives of the meeting being the adoption of the draft decisions for the establishment of the common ICT market and the draft declaration of the Heads of State and Government on the Information Society. After highlighting the benefits to be derived from a common telecommunications market and ICT through the harmonisation of the relevant legislative and regulatory texts, he recalled the main ongoing telecommunications and ICT programs in ECOWAS as well as the progress accomplished. He made reference to the accomplishment of the Intelcom I and Intelcom II programs. He concluded his speech by soliciting for support for the private sector participation to the needs of the region in terms of Regional GSM Roaming and the development of Telecommunications and ICT infrastructures.

In his opening speech, the Minister of the Communication of the Federal Republic of the Nigeria welcomed all his colleagues and other delegates to Abuja. He thanked the Executive Secretariat for giving the Federal Government of Nigeria the opportunity to convene the meeting. He placed emphasis on the necessity to build capacity in order to promote the development of ICT by developing the regional infrastructure networks, not only for the usage of the populations, but also to contribute to better regional integration.

3. **Election of Bureau**

The following bureau was elected to conduct the deliberations of the meeting:

- i. Chairman: Niger.
- ii. Rapporteurs: Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Nigeria and The Gambia.

4. **Adoption of Agenda and Work Programme**

The meeting's Agenda and Work Programme were adopted after amendment.

The agenda is as follows:

1. Consideration of the report of the Experts preparatory meeting
2. Consideration of Draft decisions of the Authority of Heads of State and Government on the creation of a common market for ICT in the ECOWAS/UEMOA zone
3. Consideration of the draft Declaration of Heads of State on the Information Society in ECOWAS Region
4. Any other business

5. Summary of Deliberations

5.1 Presentation of the report of the Experts preparatory meeting

The report of the Preparatory Meeting of the Experts was presented to the Ministers that made the following observations:

- the Ministers appreciated the quality of the Experts' report;
- the Ministers adopted the report of the Experts.

5.2 Presentation of Draft decisions of the Authority of Heads of State and Government on the creation of a common market for ICT in the ECOWAS/UEMOA zone

The meeting recognized the important work carried out by the Experts to finalize the document relating to the draft decisions and:

- congratulated the Experts for the accomplished work in the consideration and the validation of the draft decisions to be submitted to the Heads of State and Government;
- highly appreciated the quality of the document;
- recommended submitting the document to the next Council of the Heads of State and Government for consideration and adoption.

5.3 Presentation of the draft Declaration of Heads of State on the Information Society in ECOWAS Region

The meeting recognized that the Telecommunications and ICT are essential components to reach an all-inclusive information Society. Therefore, the Ministers adopted the draft Declaration of the Heads of states and of Government on the Information Society.

In addition, the meeting urged more exchanges and consultations between the Ministers in charge of the Telecommunications and ICT by using all the opportunities offered by the ICT regarding bridging the digital divide in the ECOWAS region.

7. Any other business

No topic was discussed

8. Adoption of report

This report was adopted after amendments.

Done at Abuja this 11th Day of May 2006.

Mr. Oumarou HADARI

Chairman

For the Meeting

VOTE OF THANKS

The participants at the sixth meeting of ECOWAS ministers in charge of telecommunications and ICT, held in Abuja from 8th to 11th May 2006 at the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat, take this opportunity to thank His Excellency Olusegun OBASANJO, president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the government and the people of Nigeria for the hospitality and all the care during their stay here in Abuja.

Abuja, 11th May 2006

Mr. Oumarou HADARI

Chairman

For the meeting